

THE ORACLE OF TO-DAY

A Modern Improvement Found at the Railroad Station.

It had never occurred to him that beyond possibly a few nervous women who inquired at hysterical intervals the time the 3:35 P. M. train left for New Canaan, Conn., that there were people who took a bureau of information in a railroad station seriously, or, for that matter, that the bureau took

kept his hand gripped on the sleeve of the woman's dress, as though he feared she might stampede at any moment.



itself seriously. He was a New Yorker and he had a New Yorker's aversion to asking questions that might suggest ignorance on his part concerning any known topic.

The other afternoon, however, he stood in front of a bureau of information for three-quarters of an hour waiting for a friend he had agreed to meet there, and in that time he learned not only that the bureau was expected to untangle all time-table riddles as a matter of course, but that a great part of the travelling public looked upon it either as an encyclopedia or as a friendly disposed confessional, to which all sorts of troubles and confidences might be entrusted. Incidentally, the New Yorker discovered that the individual who dispensed information through the little square window had an amazing fund of ready-to-serve facts, and he found, also, that it was an exception when the dispenser muffed or footled any of the questions that were constantly being hurled at him.



When the New Yorker took his place in front of the square window an announcer, standing on a platform at one end of the waiting room, was chanting through a huge

"Christine," broke in the woman, "Christine, be sure it was Eighty-sixth street. Didn't I say in the letter it was—"

telephone, which gave him an appearance of being grotesquely out of focus, the name of cities that might be reached "on track No. 2." A lean little man with a large, worried frown in his eyes was vainly attempting to get the outgoing tide of passengers and was making but little headway, when his eye suddenly fell upon the bureau of information.

There was another applicant for information impatiently waiting his turn and the dispenser dismissed the lean man and his larger half with little ceremony.

of them gallant five ladies and you're liable to crack or get scorched; this ain't no toy fire.

"I've got influence in the department," the spokesman of the Rescue announced, "and I'm going to see to it personally that that fellow's fired. I told him so, too."



"GOING TO TAKE HER RIGHT BACK TO THE GREEN FIELDS OF VIRGINIA."

a fragile, stoop-shouldered man in black, shiny clothes, a ready-made four-in-hand coat and a complexion like a collage of various shades of brown and red. He moved nearer to the little square window. The fragile man held an open time table in his hand and with his index finger marking the place he thrust it through the window.

"I guess I've fetched you fellows this time," he exclaimed as an expression of gleeful satisfaction spread itself over the parchment-bound countenance. "Here's your high-topped vestibule limited leaving Salamanca, N. Y., at one hour and five minutes there. 'At' stands for 'arrive,' don't it, an' 'leaves' don't it? Well, here it is, an' the index finger moved rapidly up and down the narrow columns. "Train No. 1, at Salamanca 10:30 P. M. Lv. Salamanca 9:35 P. M. How be you gals' account for that?"

The expression of gleeful satisfaction glowed into one of personal triumph. "What I want you to tell me," he demanded, "is how them Salamanca natives call 'late' if they get there an hour 'fore it arrives they'll git there just three minutes before it leaves. Must keep them fellows out there busy havin' blind staggers."

The dispenser bestowed one pitying glance upon his customer and handed back the time table.

"Salamanca is the place," he explained solemnly, "where the sun turns his watch back an hour to keep from getting home-sick for little old New York. Don't you ever hear of Central or Eastern time, did you? Go and think up another one. Your a key winner."

The fragile man departed with the mirth all gone from his countenance.

HARD TO KEEP DOWN BEGGARS.

MORE THAN 500 ARRESTED HERE SINCE LAST SUMMER.

Difficulties of Catching Them—Many Vagrants, Incorrigible, Some Safe Breakers—Frequent Letter Writers—Artists in Throwing Fits—Fond of Tattoos.

Life to the beggars of New York is not so smooth sailing as it used to be. The professional mendicant has his troubles, chief of which just now is an uncommonly enthusiastic and persistent desire on the part of the officials of the mendicant department of the Charity Organization Society to make his acquaintance.

This desire is by no means recent date but the methods now in vogue to accomplish it have changed from those in use fifteen years ago when the society first began to cooperate with the Police Department for the suppression of the beggars.

Early last summer the force of the mendicant department was increased by a mendicant squad, consisting of four police officers. Since they appeared on the scene 500 arrests of beggars have been made and most of the offenders have been sentenced for the full term of six months.

In every case determined efforts have been made to effect a permanent disposition; that is, to lock up the prisoner's record, and out where he came from, if he ever had a home and if so to make arrangements for him to go there upon leaving prison. The society also tries to furnish assistance to any beggar who indicates a desire to become self-supporting. Under the old system the work of the department began and ended with arrest and prosecution, which alone was the expert, doing little toward eliminating entirely professional beggars.

But this is not all. The department is now working to establish a national bureau, which shall put at the disposal of every similar department in the United States complete descriptive data of every professional beggar, man or woman, who has ever operated in New York. As all mendicants who show their faces here from time to time will practically be a history of the mendicants of the country.

As a means to this end no less than 2,100 life records or "pasts" have already been collected, many of which include a minute description of physical peculiarities and body marks and also measurements by the Bertillon system. Sometimes a photograph goes along with the past, the establishment of a rogues' gallery is another project of the mendicant department which is well under way.

"Apropos of body or skin marks," said an officer, "it may be news to some people to learn that no class of wanderers except sailors show such partiality for tattooing as the professional beggar."

"For instance," said a photograph of John Smith, alias Denzel, alias Butler, an incorrigible beggar, aged 21 years, now in the workhouse who is quite a sensible-looking fellow, you see. Well, that man's arms are almost covered with tattooed devices. They include a wreath, heart and anchor, an anchor, horse's head and sailor, a coat of arms and anchor, and an American eagle—decorations which would lead to his identification anywhere."

NOW FOR A PUSH-CART MARKET

IT IS ABOUT TO BE OPENED ON THE EAST SIDE.

Existing Congestion of the Streets by Peddlers in the Ghetto That Street Cleaning Commissioner Woodbury Wants to Get Rid Of—The New Market.

The pushcart market planned by Street Cleaning Commissioner Woodbury, in the open space bounded by Attorney, Clinton and Ridge streets, will be opened in two or three days. The two blocks Major Woodbury has selected are part of the property condemned for the building of the Williamsburg bridge.

Almost from the day of his appointment Major Woodbury has been seeking a plan for taking the food peddlers of the East Side off the streets. At last he has been

able to accomplish his aim. The new market, which will accommodate more than 500 pushcarts, has been surfaced with asphalt, has been equipped with drains and catch basins and with hydrants for flushing the pavement.

The market will be confined to the sale of fish, bread and other foodstuffs. It is taking these food peddlers from the street. Major Woodbury has had two purposes in view. In both purposes he has been animated by a desire to protect the health of the tenement dwellers of the lower East Side.

Some time ago he had photographic taken of the atmospheric conditions in the different localities of the city. By means of these photographs it was shown that the air and the dust in the thickly populated

with all sorts of refuse thrown from the carts. Commissioner Woodbury says that the removal of the pushcarts and fish and other goods from the streets will cause no hardship to the people of the East Side. The new market will be almost at the doors of the tenement inhabitants and at the same time will mean a walk of only a few blocks for the housewives.

The accompanying illustrations show the congested conditions in the streets and the conditions under which a food peddler is sold on the East Side.

men and women in New York. Curiousities of the Distribution of the Sexes in This City.

THE PUSH CART MARKET IN ORCHARD STREET.

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There are more women and girls than there are men and boys in Brooklyn by some 20,000. There are also more women and girls than there are men and boys in Manhattan, and the disparity is greater in some districts than in others.

In the downtown wards of Manhattan men predominate very largely. In the First Assembly district, which includes the whole of the lower West Side, south of Spring street between Broadway and the North River, there are 5,000 more men than women.

In the Second Assembly district, which includes the lower East Side, south of Spring street, there are 1,000 more men than women. The same ratio prevails in all the districts, male and in the Eighth Assembly district on the East Side, where there are 1,000 more men than women.

The disparity in the downtown districts is accounted for by these causes. The women are engaged in domestic work, and the men are engaged in business. The women are engaged in domestic work, and the men are engaged in business.

THE FISH PEDDLER'S CORNER.

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